

Regrettably, it would take more than a decade before additional efforts to find a formula that would hold out the possibility of resolving the complex issues with Israel's other Arab neighbors would bear fruit. Certainly the break up of the Soviet Union and the gulf war were defining moments that totally reshaped the political landscape in the Middle East and improved the prospect for peace. The seeds of today's agreement were clearly sown during the 1991 Madrid Conference with the road map outlined for resolving both bilateral and multilateral issues within the context of the Madrid Framework.

The key provisions of the interim agreement include elections of an 82-member Palestinian Council that will oversee most aspects of Palestinian life in the West Bank and Gaza, the elimination of offensive clauses from the Palestinian covenant that call for the elimination of Israel, assignment of responsibility for religious sites, the temporary deployment of an international observer delegation to Hebron, the redeployment of most Israeli troops from Palestinian cities and towns, and the staged release of prisoners.

This interim agreement is to remain in force through May 1999 and builds upon the September 1993 Declaration of Principles, in which Israel and the PLO exchanged mutual recognition, and the May 1994 Cairo agreement, which established a framework for Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip and Jericho.

We can all be justly proud of the enormous progress that has been made to undo the destruction and distrust that are the byproduct of decades of hatred and havoc. I for one am confident that the trust and good will that has been created by the peace process thus far will energize all parties to resolve all the remaining issues that stand in the way of a permanent agreement.

I do not seek to minimize the difficulties of the issues that remain to be resolved. They include matters related to boundaries, to the nature of the Palestinian entity, to the future of Jewish settlements in Palestinian areas, to the disposition of refugees, and finally to the status of Jerusalem. However, it is clear to me that the people of the Middle East are committed to finding a comprehensive solution to all the disagreements that have stood in the way of a permanent and lasting peace. I believe that we in the United States stand ready to do all that we can to facilitate that effort.●

WORLD MARITIME DAY 1995

● Mr. STEVENS. Mr. President, as you may know, World Maritime Day 1995 will be observed this week, and the theme this year focuses on the achievements and challenges of the International Maritime Organization [IMO].

The IMO was created under the auspices of the United Nations in 1948, and over the past 47 years has led the way

to significant improvements in safety in the maritime industry and reductions in marine pollution around the world.

I ask that the letter sent to me by Coast Guard Capt. Guy Goodwin, which brought World Maritime Day 1995 to my attention, be printed in the RECORD.

Captain Goodwin provided me with a copy of the message delivered by IMO Secretary-General William O'Neil to commemorate World Maritime Day, and I ask that this, too, be printed in the RECORD.

I believe both Captain Goodwin and IMO Secretary-General O'Neil make important points about the need to continue to strive for safer shipping and cleaner oceans, and I encourage other Senators to read these messages.

The material follows:

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION,
U.S. COAST GUARD,

Hon. TED STEVENS,

Chairman, Subcommittee on Oceans on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, U.S. Senate, Washington, DC.

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: The International Maritime Organization has announced that World Maritime Day 1995 will be observed during the week of September 25 to 29, 1995. The theme for this year's observance is "50th Anniversary of the United Nations: IMO's Achievements and Challenges". As you know, Mr. Chairman, IMO has succeeded in winning the support of the Maritime world by being pragmatic, effective and above all by concentrating on the technical issues related to safety at sea and the prevention of pollution from ships, topics that are of most concern to its member states IMO's priorities are often described in the slogan "safer shipping and cleaner oceans."

Until recently the indications were that IMO'S efforts to improve safety and reduce pollution were paying off. The rate of serious casualties was falling and the amount of all and other pollutants entering the sea was decreasing quite dramatically. But recently there has been a disturbing rise in accidents and our fear is that, if nothing is done, the progress we have diligently fought for over the last few decades will be lost. To avert this danger, IMO has taken a number of actions including establishing a sub-committee to improve the way IMO regulations are implemented by flag States, encouraging the establishment of regional port State control arrangements, adopting a new mandatory International Safety Management Code, and adopting amendments to the convention dealing with standards of training, certification and watchkeeping for seafarers. When these and other measures are added together they make an impressive package that should make a significant contribution to safety and pollution prevention in the years to come. The Coast Guard has been an active player at IMO regarding these and other matters.

Enclosed is a message from the Secretary-General of the IMO, Mr. W. A. O'Neil, marking the observance of World Maritime Day 1995.

Sincerely,

G. T. GOODWIN,
Captain, USCG,
Chief, Congressional Affairs.

Encl: World Maritime Day Message of Secretary General O'Neil. —

WORLD MARITIME DAY 1995

Fifty years ago the United Nations was created. When people consider the United

Nations today, most think only of the headquarters in New York or peacekeeping missions around the world. Very few people know that the United Nations indeed has another side.

This side, of course, consists of the specialized agencies of the U.N. system which deal with such matters as the development of telecommunications, the safety of aviation, the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the improvement of education, the world's weather, and international shipping, the particular responsibility of the International Maritime Organization.

IMO was established by means of a convention which was adopted under the auspices of the United Nations in 1948 and today has 152 Member States. Its most important treaties cover more than 98 percent of world shipping.

IMO succeeded in winning the support of the maritime world by being pragmatic, effective and above all by concentrating on the technical issues related to safety at sea and the prevention of pollution from ships, topics that are of most concern to its Member States. IMO's priorities are often described in the slogan "safer shipping and cleaner oceans."

But today I do not want to focus on past successes. Instead I would like to talk to you about the future. Nobody can predict precisely what will happen in the shipping world during the next few years but there are indications that, from a safety point of view, we should be especially vigilant.

The difficult economic conditions of the last two decades have discouraged shipowners from ordering new tonnage and there is evidence that, in some cases, the maintenance of vessels has suffered. The combination of age and poor maintenance has obvious safety implications. Shipping as an industry is also undergoing great structural changes that have resulted in the fleets of the traditional flags declining in size while newer shipping nations have emerged.

IMO has no vested interest in what flag a ship flies or what country its crew members come from. But we are interested in the quality of the operation. We certainly can have no objection to shipowners saving money—unless those savings are made at the expense of safety or the environment. If that happens then we are very concerned indeed.

Until recently the indications were that IMO's efforts to improve safety and reduce pollution were paying off. The rate of serious casualties was falling and the amount of oil and other pollutants entering the sea was decreasing quite dramatically. But recently there has been a disturbing rise in accidents and our fear is that, if nothing is done, the progress we have diligently fought for over the last few decades will be lost. To avert this danger IMO has taken a number of actions.

We have set up a special sub-committee to improve the way IMO regulations are implemented by flag States.

We have encouraged the establishment of regional port State control arrangements so that all countries which have ratified IMO Conventions and have the right to inspect foreign ships to make sure that they meet IMO requirements can do this more effectively.

We have adopted a new mandatory International Safety Management Code to improve standards of management and especially to make sure that safety and environmental issues are never overlooked or ignored.

We have recently adopted amendments to the convention dealing with standards of training, certification and watchkeeping for seafarers. The Convention has been modernized and restructured, but most important of

all, new provisions have been introduced which will help to make sure that the Convention is properly implemented.

When these and other measures are added together they make an impressive package that should make a significant contribution to safety and pollution prevention in the years to come. But I think we need something more.

IMO's standards have been so widely adopted that they affect virtually every ship in the world. Therefore, in theory, the casualty and pollution rates of flag States should be roughly the same but in actual practice they vary enormously. That can only be because IMO regulations are put into effect differently from country to country. The measures I have just outlined will help to even out some of these differences, but they will only really succeed if everybody involved in shipping wants them to.

That sounds simple enough. Surely everybody is interested in safety and the prevention of pollution and will do what they can to promote them? To a certain degree perhaps they are—but the degree of commitment seems to vary considerably. The majority of shipowners accept their responsibilities and conduct their operations with integrity at the highest level.

Some others quite deliberately move their ships to different trading routes if Governments introduce stricter inspections and controls: they would rather risk losing the ship and those on board than to undertake and pay for the cost of carrying out the repairs they know to be necessary. Some Governments are also quite happy to take the fees for registering ships under their flag, but fail to ensure that safety and environmental standards are enforced.

The idea that a ship would willingly be sent to sea in an unsafe condition and pose a danger to its crew is difficult to believe and yet it does happen.

The reasons for this are partly historical. We have become so used to the risks involved in seafaring that we have come to see them as a cost that has to be paid, a price which is exacted for challenging the wrath of the oceans. We must change this attitude, this passive acceptance of the inevitability of disaster. When a ship sinks we should all feel a sense of loss and failure, because accidents are not inevitable—they can and should be prevented.

The actions taken by IMO during the last few years will undoubtedly help to improve safety and thereby save lives, but they will have an even more dramatic effect if they help to change the culture of all those engaged in shipping and make safety not just a vague aspiration but a part of every day living, so that it comes as second nature. This is a clear, precise target—a target that is within our grasp if we continue to put our minds and energies to the task.

Fifty years ago, when the United Nations was being planned, few people believed that there would ever be an effective international organization devoted to shipping safety. But, in the same spirit that led to the founding of the United Nations, IMO itself was born. The vision which led to this has been realized and seafarers of the world have benefitted as a result.

However, casualties still do occur and much remains to be done by IMO, by its Member Governments, by the shipping industry and by the seafarers who crew the world's ships, in fact, by all of us involved in shipping. The waters are not uncharted, the course is known, the destination is clear. It is up to us to conduct the voyage in such a way that our objective of maximum safety is in fact realized.●

SCHOOLS FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND

● Mr. ROCKEFELLER. Mr. President, I would like to take this opportunity to commend the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind for 125 years of service to students with disabilities in my State.

On this very day, September 28 in 1870 the doors of the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind were first opened in the small community of Romney, WV. At that time, 25 deaf and 5 blind children were enrolled that first year in classes in a modest facility. Since that time, literally thousands of men and women of all ages with hearing and/or visual disabilities have passed through the hallowed halls of the West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind.

Today, hundreds of individuals receive a variety of services through programs offered by these schools—programs like Be a Star, which earned national recognition in the 1993-94 school year as a model for hearing and visually impaired youth as volunteers. People assume that students with disabilities are the recipients of community service initiatives but through Romney's program, the handicapped students were able to get involved in community service projects and make their own personal contributions to the local community which has supported the institution for more than a century. Currently during the 1994-95 school year, the institution is implementing the Stars for Others Program. The goal, once again, is to let students be the leaders they can be in their respective communities. The school expects this year to log over 5,000 hours of staff and student volunteer hours of public service, and I am quite proud of this initiative.

In addition to the regular educational programs offered on campus, over 100 preschoolers and their families receive services through special outreach programs. More than 450 students with visual disabilities throughout our State receive Braille and large print materials through the Instructional Resource Center. Over 250 individuals receive talking books through a loan program coordinated by the Library of Congress. Captioned films are made available through the Captioned Film Depository. Each year, many children with hearing and/or visual disabilities participate in the Preschool Diagnostic and Evaluation Program and in the summer enrichment programs.

This is a tremendous institution striving to improve its services and enhance the quality of life for students with disabilities so that they can live as independently as possible. The efforts made daily by every administrator, every teacher, every individual associated with the West Virginia Schools for the Blind and the Deaf have opened many doors to people with disabilities, and given them opportunities for jobs and freedom that they may not

have otherwise. The schools have stressed that a physical impediment should not be a wall that blocks students from the life, but that they too can overcome challenges and play a vital role in our society. I share this view and am proud of the tremendous progress made by our society over time in recognizing the potential of individuals with disabilities. This institution has contributed a great deal to helping ensure that every American, regardless of disability, should have the chance to be happy, productive members of our society.

The West Virginia Schools for the Deaf and the Blind make a very real difference in the lives of students and their families. With great pride, and on behalf of all of West Virginia, I send my warmest congratulations on such a special anniversary, as well as best wishes for more years of service.●

APPOINTMENTS BY THE VICE PRESIDENT

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Chair, on behalf of the Vice President, in accordance with 22 U.S.C. 1928a-1928d, as amended, appoints the following Senators as Members of the Senate Delegation to the North Atlantic Assembly fall meeting during the first session of the 104th Congress, to be held in Turin, Italy, October 5-9, 1995: The Senator from Mississippi, Mr. COCHRAN; the Senator from Iowa, Mr. GRASSLEY; the Senator from Alaska, Mr. MURKOWSKI; the Senator from Washington, Mr. GORTON; and the Senator from Hawaii, Mr. AKAKA.

TRUTH IN LENDING ACT AMENDMENTS

Mr. GRAMM. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the immediate consideration of H.R. 2399 just received from the House.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will report.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 2399) to amend the Truth in Lending Act to clarify the intent of such act and to reduce burdensome regulatory requirements on creditors.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection to the immediate consideration of the bill?

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. D'AMATO. Mr. President, I rise today to voice my support for the Truth in Lending Act Amendments of 1995. Our colleagues in the House recently passed this legislation. It is the product of bipartisan cooperation between the Senate and the House. The broad bipartisan support that this bill has attracted is evidence of the urgency of the situation that it addresses. As chairman of the Banking Committee, I believe that immediate action